







MINT OFFICE BUILDING
37 AND 39 NORTH SEVENTH STREET

## Ye Olde Mint

Being a brief description of the first U. S. Mint, established by Congress in the year 1792, at Seventh Street and Sugar Alley (now Filbert Street) Philadelphia : : : : :

COMPLIMENTS OF

Frank H. Stewart Electric Co.

7th and Filbert Streets :: Philadelphia

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## **FOREWORD**

THE great interest shown in numismatics and antiquities nowadays has caused this imperfect endeavor to collate some of the interesting historical data still in existence regarding the first United States Mint, and also at the same time preserve by means of photographs and descriptions the present appearance of the old buildings.

Practically every chronological list of important events which have happened in the United States records the establishment of the first United States Mint in Philadelphia in 1792, and if anyone has the time and inclination to investigate the history and coinage of the mint for the first forty (40) years of its existence, and publish to the numismatic world the result of his research, I shall be satisfied if my efforts here should furnish the slightest inspiration.

Numismatists very rarely, if ever, pay any attention to the persons who made their rare and valuable specimens of coins, and probably still less attention to the places where they were made.

The great majority of the rare United States coins were made in buildings still standing at 37 and 39 North Seventh Street, Philadelphia, or, to be more exact, in the coinage building in the rear of these numbers. Until recently these buildings were unmarked, and the people of the neighborhood in a great many instances were unaware of the fact that for a period of forty (40) years all of the United States coins were made so near at hand. Those who daily walked past the buildings had nothing to direct their attention to them, and it is safe to say that not five hundred persons in Philadelphia could point out what at one time was one of the most impor-

tant buildings in the United States, as well as the first erected under authority of Congress for Federal purposes.

The author purchased the buildings and feels that it is his duty to do what he can to describe them before they are demolished, and also at the same time publish such data in his possession as may prove interesting or valuable to the limited few who collect rare coins or are in any way interested in what was an exceedingly important department of our early national life.

FRANK H. STEWART.





COINAGE BUILDING

REAR OF 37 AND 39 NORTH SEVENTH STREET

UNCOUNTEDLY THE FIRST BRICK BUILDING FRECTED BY ACT OF CONGRESS FOR PUBLIC USE

## Ye OLDE MINT

THE first United States mint buildings are indeed historical in more ways than one, and while a number of suggestions have been made for their preservation it is highly probable they will eventually be located by the means of a bronze tablet on the front of the steel and concrete structure in contemplation for the use of the Frank H. Stewart Electric Company, who now occupy the buildings adjoining them on the south and east. The retention of the buildings on the present site is prohibited on account of the great value of the land and its location in the heart of the business section, and their removal by private enterprise to another site unlikely because of the great expense that such removal would entail.

If a few 1804 dollars, which now have a record price of thirty-six hundred dollars each, should be found in the buildings, their removal would be rendered easier, provided they were found before the destruction of the buildings, but this is highly improbable, although there will undoubtedly be a few coins discovered, as there were when the building was erected on the Filbert Street lot on the site of the old mint smelting house, which is contiguous to the Seventh Street lot.

Washington in his first annual address to Congress referred to the importance of uniformity in the currency.

His second annual address urged the importance of the establishment of a mint.

In his third address he spoke of disorders in the existing currency, the scarcity of change, and recommended carrying into effect the resolution already entered into concerning the establishment of a mint; also remarked that measures had been taken for procuring some of the most necessary artists, together with the necessary apparatus.

His fourth annual address referred to employment of artists, both from abroad and at home, to aid in the establishment of the mint. He also stated that provision had been made for the requisite buildings, which were then being put in proper condition, and spoke of a small beginning in the coinage of half "dismes."

His sixth annual address stated "the mint had entered upon the coinage of the precious metals, and there was a pleasing prospect that the institution would at no remote day realize the expectation which was originally formed of its utility."

His seventh annual address called attention to "the necessity of further legislation for checking abuses in particular quarters, and for carrying its business more completely into effect."

It will be seen from Washington's reference in six out of eight of his messages to Congress to the currency and mint that he was deeply interested in the matter and considered it of more than ordinary importance.

It has been stated that he was a frequent visitor to the mint, and that the first silver dismes and half dismes were made from silver contributed by him. The will of John L. Kates, a former owner of the buildings, says that the corner-stone was laid by Washington, but this is unlikely, as he was not in Philadelphia the day on which it is supposed to have been laid. The contents of the corner-stone when found will undoubtedly contain something of great interest to antiquarians.

The original buildings, with the exception of the smelting house, still stand at 37 and 39 North Seventh Street, and in the rear of these numbers. There were three different brick buildings, all separated by yards and alleys, those facing Seventh Street were used for executive offices, etc. Immediately back of them was the one used as the coinage department, and back of that was the small two-story building facing Filbert Street and about twenty feet back of the line of that street. The old building used as the smelting house was torn down the latter part of 1907, and a four-story concrete building erected on the site.

The frontispiece shows the front buildings facing Seventh Street, and the illustration opposite page 5 the coinage building back of them, which is separated from the front buildings by a court yard 18 feet deep. Inasmuch as considerable attempt at ornamentation was made on the front of the coinage building, it is quite probable that this was the first building erected. Tradition has it that this was originally three stories high and that the top story was burned off. If such was the case the third story was of wooden construction. The walled up windows in the rear show the window sills to be badly charred.

Remains of old arched brick vaults still exist in the basement of 39 North Seventh Street.

The building in the rear, used as the coinage department, has two arched and paved brick vaults in its basement intact except the doors. One of the vaults, illustrated opposite page 9, has a smaller vault in its rear end, which was undoubtedly used as a storage place for the most valuable of the mint's possessions. Strong brick arches and exceedingly heavy joists, averaging twelve inches square, were placed in the basement to support the coinage presses above.

The building formerly facing Filbert Street had no basement, and when excavations were made for the new building two old brick-walled wells were uncovered, one of which was four feet in diameter, with cesspool refuse in the bottom. The other well was about seven feet in diameter and the bottom was not reached, as the excavations only went down about 12 feet. These wells were between the old building and Filbert Street. The larger one was three or four feet back of the centre of the property at 35 North Seventh Street, and the other was just off the southeast corner of the demolished building. It is quite likely that the largest well furnished water for the distillery of Michael Shubart.

It is interesting to note that in the excavations on the site of the old building, several copper coins and planchets were found, most of which are illustrated opposite page 20. Two worthy of mention are about the size of half-cents, but with

small holes in the centre, one of them having a milled edge, the other a plain edge. They are supposed to be planchets for the excessively rare 1792 silver centre cents, which must certainly have been struck off at the mint, otherwise the planchets would not have been found there. The author now has these finds in his possession, as well as a collection of hand forged hardware taken off the old building.

On May 8, 1792, the director of the mint was authorized, with the approbation of the President, to purchase a quantity of copper for the coinage of cents and half-cents, and Congress also provided that when fifty thousand (50,000) dollars of such cents and half-cents had been coined notice should be given to the public in at least two newspapers, and that any attempt to pass other copper coins would result in their forfeiture.

From a national viewpoint the old mint buildings are the most historical in the United States, because they were the first erected by the authority of the Federal Government for public use. It was the sole United States Mint from 1792 to 1833. The corner-stone was laid July 31, 1792, and presumably by David Rittenhouse, the celebrated astronomer and philosopher and first director of the mint. The achievements of Rittenhouse very readily place him in the same distinguished class as Benjamin Franklin.

The ground on which the first United States mint buildings stand was sold by William Penn to the Pennsylvania Land Company, and transferred to it by deed dated August 12, 1699, "in the 11th year of our Soverign Lord King William III, of England, Scotland, France and Ireland."

The Pennsylvania Land Company then consisted of Tobias Collett, haberdasher; Michael Russell, weaver; Daniel Quare, watchmaker, and Henry Goldney, linendraper, all of London, England.

The deed was signed by Penn August 17, 1699, and was stamped with two six-penny stamps. The consideration was





VAULT WITHIN A VAULT

BASEMENT OF COINAGE BUILDING THE "BURGLAR PROOF" OF 1792

2,000 pounds. Herbert Springett, Wm. Martin and Wm. Springett acted as witnesses.

The mint grounds are part of "six inland city lots, lying between the two rivers, Delaware and Schuylkill."

This deed, in addition to the six city lots which were evidently thrown in as a bonus, conveyed two river front lots, one on the Delaware and one on the Schuylkill, also 60,310 acres of land, variously and indefinitely located for the greater part. Two hundred and ten acres of this land was granted by warrant to Richard Noble, "old renter," by Penn the 14th day of 5th month, 1683, and afterwards by a patent to Noble the 5th day of the 6th month, 1685, by Thomas Lloyd, James Claypoole and Robert Turner, commissioners for Penn.

Another parcel of 100 acres of this land was part of a tract of 309 acres, "granted by an order from New York," and surveyed on or about the 12th day of May, 1679, unto Wm. Clark, and afterwards disposed of to Richard Noble, and which was on the 8th day of the 8th month, 1689, granted and confirmed unto Noble by Wm. Markham and John Goodson, commissioners for Penn.

The 310 acres were transferred to Penn by Noble February 22, 1695.

The Penn deed to the Pennsylvania Land Company gives recital of grant to Penn by Charles II.

Richard Noble came over in the ship Griffith with John Fenwick in 1675 and landed at Salem, N. J. The Griffith was the first English ship to land in west New Jersey.

Noble surveyed and plotted the town of Burlington, N. J., in 1677, and on December 15, 1679, was appointed surveyor by Governor Andross, of New York, as surveyor of Upland, now Chester, Pa. He also surveyed a part of the present site of Philadelphia for the Swedes, Swansons, in 1681.

Wm. Markham was a cousin of Wm. Penn and landed in America in 1681. He at one time held a captaincy in the English army. He was the first Deputy-Governor of Pennsylvania.

Thomas Lloyd was president of council, justice of the peace

of Philadelphia, and *de facto* Deputy-Governor in 1690. He founded, under Penn's instructions, the first public school in Pennsylvania in 1689.

James Claypoole built the first brick house in Philadelphia, and was a member of council in 1687 and one of the Free Society of Traders.

Robert Turner was a close friend of Penn, and at one time a merchant of Dublin, Ireland. Penn was in frequent correspondence with him and, among other things, wrote him on May 5, 1681, how and why the name of Pennsylvania was selected. He was also a member of the Free Society of Traders.

John Goodson was a prominent man in the early days of the settlement of Pennsylvania, and like Markham, Lloyd, Claypoole, Turner and others empowered to sell land for Penn.

The Pennsylvania Land Company held possession until December 26, 1758, when Francis Rawle, acting as its attorney, transferred a parcel containing part of the mint lots to Daniel Roberdeau, he being the highest bidder at a public sale.

This piece of land was described as a "certain piece of ground situate on the east side of the Seventh Street from the Delaware, City of Philadelphia, containing in breadth on the said street 50 feet, and in length or depth 198 feet, or thereabouts, be the same more or less, to the middle or half way between Sixth Street and Seventh Street," bounded on the south by the back ends of High Street (now Market) and on the north by land of Rebecca Cooper.

On December 26, 1758 (the same date as the Roberdeau deed) Francis Rawle, attorney for Thomas Hyam, merchant; Thomas Reynolds, clothworker, and Thomas How, goldsmith, only surviving feoffees in trust of the Pennsylvania Land Company, sold to Rebecca Cooper, spinster, as the highest bidder at public sale, "a certain piece of ground situate on the east side of the Seventh Street from Delaware in the said City of Philadelphia, containing in breadth on the same street 50 feet."

This lot was also 198 feet deep and bounded on the east by land conveyed to Richard Farmer, as was the ground sold to Daniel Roberdeau. Joshua Howell and William Govett were witnesses on both the deeds and both were acknowledged before Isaac Jones, Justice.

Daniel Roberdeau, by deed dated February 27, 1759, conveyed to Richard Farmer, practitioner in physics, the same piece of ground he purchased at auction of the Pennsylvania Land Company. Deed witnessed by H. W. Dovey and John Reily.

Rebecca Cooper, by deed dated April 3, 1759, also sold to Richard Farmer the ground she purchased at auction of the Pennsylvania Land Company. Her lot was bounded on the south by ground late of Daniel Roberdeau.

These two pieces of ground of 50 feet each on Seventh Street, each contained part of what afterwards became the mint lot, which faced Seventh Street, and which was, and now is, 36 feet 10 inches front, with another lot making an outlet on Filbert Street, now covered by a four-story concrete and steel-frame building occupied by the Frank H. Stewart Electric Company, and connected by openings with the building on the northeast corner of Seventh and Filbert Streets, also occupied by the same concern.

Richard Farmer and wife, by deed dated September 1, 1760, conveyed to Michael Shubart, distiller, "two certain pieces of ground," one of which was located on Seventh Street, with a frontage of 36 feet and 10 inches and with a depth of 99 feet, which was bounded on the south by a piece of ground sold by Farmer to George Keller, 20 feet by 99 feet.

The other piece of ground was on the north side of a certain 14-foot alley (now Filbert Street, mentioned for the first time), containing in breadth 17 feet on the alley and 56 feet 10 inches deep, connecting with above lot in the rear and for its entire width as well as the Keller lot.

The consideration was a yearly ground rental of 21 Spanish silver pieces of 8 of 17 pennyweight and 6 grains each, with the

option within seven years of cancellation by payment of 133 pounds, lawful money of Pennsylvania.

Shubart agreed to erect within four (4) years on one of the pieces of ground one good brick kitchen, or tenement, or other brick building at least 15 feet square.

This deed was witnessed by Robert Wilson, Jr., and John Clarkson; acknowledged by Wm. Peters, justice.

This transfer shows that the High Street lots, near Seventh Street, extended at one time back to what is now Filbert Street, and also that Richard Farmer's land was taken in whole or in part for the purpose of what then was termed an alley, and later known as Sugar Alley, then Farmers Street, and now Filbert Street.

James Ash, high sheriff, on May 27, 1790, conveyed to Frederick Hailer the land purchased by Shubart from Farmer, together with a tenement distill house and coppers, distills, worms, cisterns, tubs and other utensils belonging to said distillery.

This conveyance was subject to the payment of the yearly ground rent of 21 Spanish pieces of 8.

Jacob Barge was the creditor who caused the sale.

Frederick Wailer, surgeon barber, and wife, Christiana, July 18, 1792, sold to the United States Government the land and distill house and frame tenement building formerly owned by Shubart.

This deed recites the Act of Congress referred to elsewhere, and states "the President in pursuance thereof caused to be purchased from said Wailer, etc., etc."

Wailer made a nice profit. He bought it for 515 pounds and sold it for 4,266 2-3 dollars, subject to the ground rent as before.

This deed was acknowledged by Wailer and wife before James Biddle, president of the Court of Common Pleas, of the County of Philadelphia, July 21, 1792.

During the entire time the government owned the property it paid an annual ground rent, which seems rather strange now.

On July 1, 1792, Washington appointed David Rittenhouse director of the mint, and on July 19th, the day following the purchase, eight carpenters, besides other laborers, commenced to tear down the distillery, and on August 25th the frame work for the new building was raised.

Work on the bellows furnaces was commenced September 7th, and on September 11th six pounds of old copper for coinage was purchased at the price of one shilling three pence per pound.

Three coining presses, imported from Europe, arrived September 21st, and in October they were in operation.

On December 30, 1792, Jefferson, then Secretary of State, wrote Pinckney, our minister to England, about the difficulty of procuring copper, and suggested Sweden as a source of supply and enclosed draft on the treasury of the United States for \$10,000.

The United States of America on January 12, 1836, by deed reciting Act of Congress under date of May 1, 1830, transferred the mint grounds and buildings to Michael Kates, bell hanger, for \$8,100, he having been the highest bidder at public sale. In this deed the 14-foot alley was called Sugar Alley and the ground rent again noted.

Andrew Jackson, President of the United States of America, signed this deed and the great seal of the United States of America was attached. John Forsyth, Secretary of State, witnessed the President's signature.

On February 18, 1836, Francis Hopkinson, Clerk of the District and Circuit Courts of the United States of America for the eastern district of Pennsylvania, appeared before John Swift, Mayor of the City of Philadelphia, and on his oath said he was acquainted with the signatures of both Jackson and Forsyth and was satisfied they were their own and proper signatures.

The neighborhood of the old mint is rich in traditions regarding it, and it may happen that when the buildings are torn down some of them will be substantiated.

During the War of 1812 Dr. R. M. Patterson, Adam Eckfelt and Joseph Cloud, respectively director of the mint, chief coiner, melter and refiner, were engaged at the Breast Works at Grays Ferry, and, as these gentlemen were the chief employees of the mint at the time, it is highly probable there was considerable alarm over the safety of the mint. Among other traditions is one that the bullion, planchets and coins were walled up and buried during this scare. The actions of the British at Washington showed their tendency towards destruction of government property.

An old lady living in West Philadelphia has the original appointment of her ancestor, Joseph Cloud, to his position in the mint, signed by Washington. She would not even allow it to be photographed for fear something might happen to it while in the photographer's hands.

Biddle's Directory of 1791 gives the address of Michael Shubart, distiller, as 29 North Seventh Street; Hardie's 1793 directory gives the mint at 29 North Seventh Street, which indicates that a change of numbers in the mint property has been made since that time. Shubart was a prominent Philadelphian; during the Revolution he was a city assessor, and on one occasion took an unconditional oath while his colleagues made a reservation. In the elaborate pageant of July 4, 1788, he bore the Standard at the head of the distillery section, followed by other notables engaged in that business.

Daniel Roberdeau, mentioned elsewhere as an owner of part of the mint grounds, at one time was a brigadier-general of militia, and his name appears frequently in the Revolutionary Annals of Philadelphia as a man of pronounced ideas and stern character.

The beginning of the mint establishment may be traced back to the articles of Confederation, dated July 9, 1778, which contained the following: "The United States in Congress assembled shall also have the sole and exclusive right and power of regulating the alloy and value of coin struck by their own authority or by that of the respective States."

The Constitution of the United States, September 17, 1787, contains in Article I, Section 8: "The Congress shall have power to coin money, regulate the value thereof and of foreign coins"; and further, "No State shall coin money, emit bills of credit, make anything but gold and silver coin a tender in payment of debts."

Analysis of the above will show the reason why the various States discontinued their own coinage.

The Continental Congress, January 7, 1782, instructed Robert Morris, the financier of the Revolution, to prepare and report a table of rates at which the different species of foreign coins most likely to circulate with the United States should be received at the treasury. On January 15th, the week following, he made a lengthy report regarding the different names and values of coins then in use and the necessity of a legal tender. He stated that the necessary machinery for a mint could easily be made and that the advantage of possessing legal money in preference to any other would induce people to carry foreign money to the mint until a sufficiency were struck for the circulating medium, and the remainder of foreign gold and silver coins should be left entirely to the operations of commerce as bullion.

On April 14, 1790, Thomas Jefferson reported to the House of Representatives, advising the declination of the proposition of John H. Mitchell regarding his offer to furnish coins from Europe at a fixed price per pound for copper coins. His objections were that the opportunity of recoinage of coins would be lost, and that in transportation across the ocean it would be subject to the dangers of the sea, acts of piracy, and, in times of war, would offer the sinews of war to the enterprise of the enemy, and further, that the resource of coining household plate would be lost. The risk of counterfeiting was also noted.

Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury, on January 28, 1791, as a result of instructions on the part of the House of Representatives on April 15, 1790, sent a lengthy communication to it on "The Establishment of a Mint." This communi-

cation was evidently the basis for the act of Congress, dated April 2, 1792, establishing the mint and regulating the coins of the United States.

The mint was to be situated at the seat of government, then Philadelphia, and the President, in addition to the authority given him under the Act of March 3, 1791, was authorized to cause to be provided and put in proper condition such buildings as appeared to him to be necessary for carrying on the business of the mint.

The Act of March 3, 1791, approved by President Washtington, authorized the establishment of a mint under such regulations as should be directed by law. This Act authorized him to cause to be engaged artists and the procurement of the necessary apparatus.

On December 30, 1793, Jefferson wrote the President regarding artists. He mentioned that a certain Drotz had been hired, but, after considerable delay, refused to come to America, and that our minister at London had succeeded in getting Mr. Albion Coxe, who was probably the person of that name who had the right to make copper coins for the State of New Jersey in 1786, to accept the position as assayer. Inasmuch as it was impossible to secure abroad a chief coiner of greater ability than at home, Mr. Henry Voight, who was temporarily in the position, was favorably mentioned.

These two men were required to furnish security in the sum of ten thousand dollars each, which neither was able to do, and Jefferson stated that the coinage of precious metals was prevented for some time past, but that in order that the mint might not be entirely idle the coinage of copper had been going on. Jefferson recommended that their securities be lessened by reducing their responsibilities.

October 28, 1794, David Rittenhouse, director of the mint, reported that it had been necessary to purchase an additional lot of ground, that nearly one million of cents had been coined and a beginning made in the coinage of precious metals, that nearly 120,000 ounces of bullion had been deposited for coin-



BASEMENT OF COINAGE BUILDING

SHOWING PRESS SUPPORTS AND HAMMERED ONE INCH SQUARE IRON WINDOW BARS. TIMBERS AVERAGE 12 INCHES SQUARE, CUT SHOWS NEARLY ONE HALF OF BASEMENT



age and that a large parcel of blank dollars was ready for coining as soon as a more powerful press could be finished.

February 9, 1795, Mr. Boudinot, one of the Congressional Committee appointed to examine and report on the state of the mint, made a long report on the duties and work of the various employees.

At that time besides the buildings at 37 and 39 North Seventh Street, now belonging to the Frank H. Stewart Electric Company, a lease was held on one in the "Northern Liberties" for five years at the rent of five shillings per annum, a very trifling sum indeed.

There was more or less criticism about the conduct of the mint which Mr. Boudinot explained was due to trouble in getting competent workmen, proper materials and strong apparatus. He reported the lots for the buildings were too small and that this hindered the operations; and, further, that the frequent breaking of dies, which were all made in the mint, caused numerous delays. Up to September, 1794, the lands purchased had cost \$4,266.66; buildings, apparatus, machines, etc., \$22,720.45; copper, \$15,815.51; salaries, \$15,591.99, a grand total of \$58,394.61, which he considered a very great amount. He remarked that a great saving could be made if the machinery could be operated by water or steam instead of manual labor or that of horses. He noted that in case the projected canal between the Schuylkill and Delaware should be accomplished the heavy expense of the mint would be greatly reduced.

His report, among other things, showed that when the bullion was not in use it was kept under two locks, the keys of which were kept by the assayer and chief coiner. This was for the time it was in the custody of the chief coiner. That part not in his custody was in the vaults of the mint, also secured under two locks, keys of which were kept by the treasurer and assayer. Mention is made elsewhere regarding these vaults. He recommended a reduction in the size of the copper cent and a change in the standard for silver coins to ten parts silver and one part copper.

Henry William DeSaussure in a letter, dated the mint office, October 27, 1795, to the President of the United States, George Washington, apologized for the length of his communication and said he was prepared to deliver the direction of the mint to his successor.

He stated the coinage of gold had begun under his administration. He deemed it proper to state there was no copper in the mint fit for coining, and that the price of copper had advanced, and suggested the desirability of reducing the weight of the cent and thereby help in preventing its use by coppersmiths.

He mentioned the important fact that the standard of the silver coin in use at the mint differed from the standard fixed by law. He thought that either the law should be changed or the standard used according to law.

He suggested the desirability of having laws made to close up certain establishments making debased foreign coins and thereby curtailing the supply of gold bullion and degrading our national character.

He referred to an attempt on the mint dies and implements with nefarious views.

Elias Boudinot, in a letter dated at the mint, December 3, 1795, referred to the sudden death of Assayer Mr. Albion Coxe on the preceding Friday, and said "until this officer is replaced the business of the mint would be confined to striking cents only." In the same letter he recommended, among other things, "that some proper person be authorized to purchase on public account all small quantities of silver and gold brought to the mint, at the best market price, to be coined for the public treasury."

Elias Boudinot, in a very able letter to the President, dated at the mint, November 29, 1796, told how impossible it was to run the mint with business-like dispatch, hampered as it was by unreasonable restrictions. He pointed out how in one case a depositor of bullion below standard got 500 pounds sterling more than he should and still was within his legal

rights. In other words, it cost the mint that much to refine the bullion for which it received no compensation. He also pointed out how expensive it was to coin bullion in rotation so that each depositor got his money in turn. In this way it was just as expensive to melt and refine 20 ounces as 1,000 ounces and he recommended a fund for the mint to be used in paying off small depositors of bullion and thus be able to melt and refine in larger quantities.

February 13, 1797, Mr. Havens, of the committee to examine and report on Mr. Boudinot's letter, made his report to Congress and recommended the sum of \$2,820.71 be appropriated to make good the deficiency caused by wastage in coining gold and silver since the commencement of the coinage of these metals. The report was substantially a confirmation of the statements made by Mr. Boudinot.

May 19, 1798, recommendation of allowance to John Vaughan was made because silver bullion, to the extent of 230,888 ounces, deposited by him was of greater fineness than that regularly used in coinage.

During the latter part of 1797 it became very apparent that the out-put of the mint was not sufficient for the needs of the country, and foreign coins were necessarily continued as legal tender despite legislation to the contrary.

Elias Boudinot, in a letter from the mint to the President, dated January 3, 1799, mentioned that during the previous summer a scheme for robbing the mint was discovered. One of the persons in the mint was in collusion with outside parties. The offenders were detected, prosecuted and punished.

January 8, 1800, Boudinot reported to President Adams and called his attention to the fact that fifty thousand one hundred and eleven dollars and forty-two cents (\$50,111.42) of cents, had been coined and that it was necessary for the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States to comply with provisions of law of May 8, 1792, by giving the public notice therein mentioned.

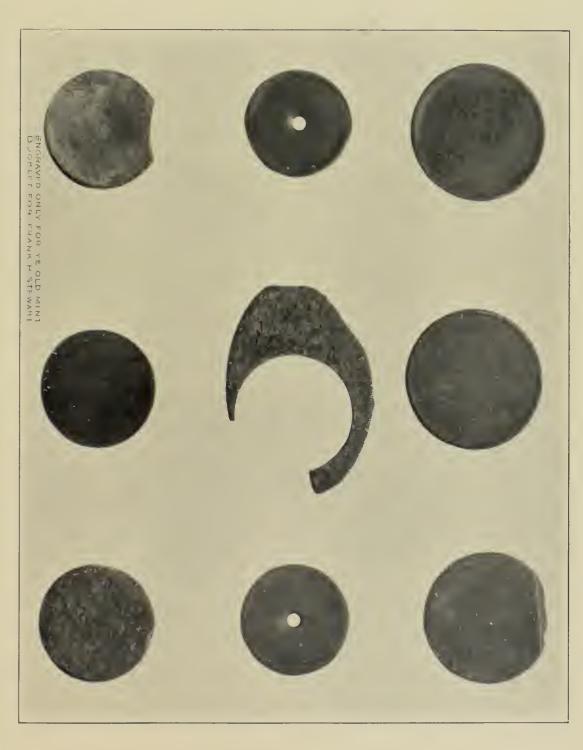
Also brought up the point that the mint was not at the seat of government, which had been moved to Washington, and if mint was to be removed steps should be taken immediately regarding it.

Also called attention to workmen in gold and silver melting down coins for commercial purposes to the loss of the United States.

Mr. Hillhouse, of the committee to whom was referred the report of the director of the mint to the President of the United States, on January 8, 1800, recommended, on March 18, 1800, that a committee be appointed to bring in a bill for repealing the first section of the Act entitled, "An Act establishing a mint and regulating the coins of the United States . . ." dated April 21, 1792, and such other sections and parts of sections of said Act as relate to the establishment of the mint, and to provide for taking care of the materials and property appertaining to the mint and which belong to the United States; and, further, that the Secretary of the Treasury be directed to report a plan for furnishing the United States with cents and halfcents as shall be deemed necessary or expedient.

February 13, 1801, Elias Boudinot advised the President that the Secretary of State, Secretary of Treasury, Comptroller of the Treasury, the Chief Justice and Attorney-General were not present on the day specified by law to assay reserved pieces of coins, and that the depositors complained of their being deprived of their reserved money, and that the check on coinage contemplated by law was frustrated. Also mentioned that the act of July 16, 1790, provided for removal of all offices attached to the seat of government to the District of Columbia on the first Monday in December, 1800. Called attention to Act of last session of Congress locating mint in Philadelphia until March 4th next.

He, on February 27, 1802, in a communication to the Secretary of the Treasury, calls attention to outstanding contracts for copper abroad which were obligatory, and the difficulty attending the securing of copper in the past. Questioned the



PLANCHETS FOR COPPER CENTS, HALF CENTS AND SILVER CENTRE CENTS, ALSO PIECE OF SCRAP COPPER FROM WHICH A HALF CENT WAS STRUCK, ALL FOUND WHILE EXCAVATIONS WERE BEING MADE FOR NEW BUILDING 631 FILBERT STREET. SIZE 15/16 OF ORIGINALS.



scheme of importing coined copper cents because of a chance of a flood of lightweight cents contrary to law, and suggested that the government would have greater security by placing contract in United States.

On March 4, 1802, Robert Scott, engraver at the mint, wrote the Secretary of Treasury, Albert Gallatin, calling attention to the probability of abolishment of the mint, explained the sacrifices he had made and desired to be invested with the exclusive privilege, according to law, of furnishing cents of the regular weight and quality free of all expense to the government at the face value.

In a letter dated March 22, 1802, Mint of the United States, Philadelphia, Elias Boudinot wrote the Secretary of Treasury, giving an inventory of the real and personal property of the mint, as follows:

"Two lots on Seventh Street between Market and Arch, 20 feet each on Seventh Street and extending back 100 feet, with a dwelling house on the north lot and a shell of a house on the south lot, which last lot widens on the rear to about 60 feet on which the stable stands. These lots pay a ground rent of \$27.50 per annum.

"A lot on Sugar Alley at the rear of the above, 20-feet front on the alley and about 100-feet deep.

"A frame building improved for a large furnace in the commons at the north end of Sixth Street, of little value, the ground being merely loaned to us.

- "Personal estate—copper planchets on hand, 22 tons.
- "Three horses, good for little but for use of mint.
- "Machinery of mint no value except for mint.
- "Five striking presses.
- "Three cutting presses.
- "One milling machine.
- "Five pairs rollers, great and small,
- "One drawing machine.
- "Three pairs smith's bellows.
- "Set blacksmith's tools.

- "Large number of hubs and dies.
- "Carpenter's tools.
- "Seven stoves.
- "One turning lathe.
- "Six scale beams, scales and weights.
- "Two sets assay scales and sundry adjusting scales.
- "Furniture in clerks' rooms.
- "Various implements used in the several departments.
- "About 2,000 bushels charcoal.
- "Engravers' tools, pots, bottles, etc.
- "An old horse cart and gears.
- "About 2,000 fire brick.
- "Considerable quantity of old iron."

Stated machinery was in poor repair and should be moved by steam instead of horses. Said lots were too small and was greatly cramped for room.

Said lots were then very valuable, being in the heart of the city. In his opinion the necessary coins of the government could not be protected at much less expense than the mint cost.

In this inventory no mention was made of the building used by the coinage department, and which, no doubt, was the best and most important building then on the lots. The sizes of the lots given are inaccurate, and the idea evidently intended to be conveyed was that there was very little of value in buildings or equipment.

In 1793 salaries of the mint employees were as follows:

David Rittenhouse, director,	\$2,000	per	annum
Tristram Dalton, treasurer,	1,200	66	6.6
Henry Voight, coiner,	1,500	66	6.6
Isaac Hugh, clerk,	312	"	6.6

The regular coinage of copper began in 1793; silver in 1794, and gold in 1795.

The following curious extracts are taken from the mint rules and regulations, dated January 1, 1825:

"The allowance under the name of drink money is hereafter to be discontinued."

"The operations of the mint throughout the year are to commence at 5 o'clock in the morning."

"Christmas Day and the Fourth of July—and no other days—are established holidays at the mint."

"He (watchman) will keep in a proper arm chest, securely locked, a musket and bayonet, two pistols and a sword. The arms are to be kept in perfect order and to be inspected by an officer once a month, when the arms are to be discharged and charged anew.

"The watchman of the mint must attend from 6 o'clock in the evening to 5 o'clock in the morning—and until relieved by the permission of an officer, or until the arrival of the doorkeeper. He will ring the yard bell precisely every hour by the mint clock from 10 o'clock until relieved by the doorkeeper, or an officer, or the workmen on working days, and will send the watch-dog through the yard immediately after ringing the bell."

The operations at the mint were suspended at different times because of yellow fever epidemics, and this, in connection with the scarcity of metal, and a fire at the mint and the use of coins for purely commercial purposes by coppersmiths, silversmiths and other tradesmen, accounts for the scarcity of certain coins made at "Ye Olde Mint," under great disadvantages, when men and horses did the work now done by electricity.

## Copy of Letter Regarding Purchase of First U. S. Mint Lots.

June 9, 1792,

DEAR SIR:

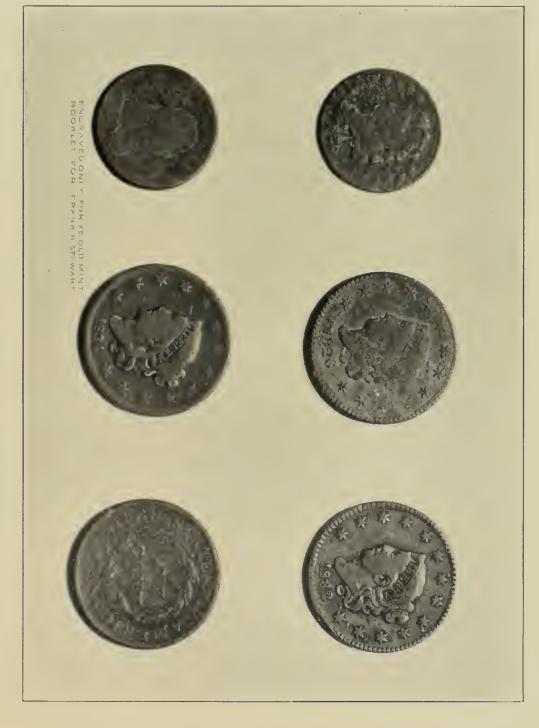
I am in sentiment with you and the Director of the Mint, respecting the purchase of the lots and houses which are offered for sale, in preference to renting—as the latter will certainly exceed the interest of the former.

That all the applications may be brought to view, and considered for coining, &c., Mr. Lear will lay the letters and engravings before you, to be shewn to the Director of the Mint. I have no other object or wish in doing it, than to obtain the best.

Yours, &c.,

G? WASHINGTON.

Mr. Jefferson.



COINS FOUND IN EXCAVATIONS MADE FOR BASEMENT OF CONCRETE BUILDING NOW IN REAR OF COINAGE BUILDING. SIZE 31/32 OF ORIGINALS.





